

# The Bloomfield Times.

FRANK MORTIMER,  
Editor and Proprietor.

AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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## The Bloomfield Times.

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BY

FRANK MORTIMER.

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IN ADVANCE.

### "Shonny's Farder."

SHONNY, my son come to me,  
Und say your lesson out;  
Come dell me somedding dot you know,  
Und vot you've been about.  
Byemby you'm goin' to peen a man,  
Den you must take der place  
Of your old farder—vear his shoes,  
Nen der ground is on his face.  
You know my son, ve all must die,  
Somedtimes or oder, dead;  
Und dell dot comes dot's bedder ve  
Hafe knowledge in our head.  
So just come here, and told me now  
Someddings, so I can see  
Vot you'm peen learnin' ebery day—  
Come here, my son, by me.  
"Come, don't you hear? Shon, my, soff,  
Did you hear me shbeak just now?  
Come, quickness, Shonny—ef you don't  
Dere's goin' to peen a row.  
Lowesa, go und get dot glub  
Dot hangs out on der rack;  
I am dat Shonny's farder, but  
I'm 'bliged ter preak his back.  
I'll show dot feller dot he can't  
Pud on some airs mit me;  
I'll beed his life mit in a inch,  
I'll led der raskell see,  
"Oh! ho! you'm comin' now, ah! ha!  
Vy didn't you come before?  
You didn't heard me? Well, all right  
Go blay outside der door."

## The Forged Letter.

TOWARDS the close of one September, Charley Dunham sent word to me to come down into Mapperley Wood and have some shooting. The Governor, Dunham *per se*, he said, had gone away on business and was not expected home for five or six weeks, so that there was nobody in occupancy of the stately halls of Mapperley House except the younger members of the family and the servants. Mapperley Wood was unusually full of game that fall, and Charley thought that the absence of his father and mother and consequence unlimited license in respect to all matters both indoors and out, offered inducements too unusual to be resisted.

"Besides," wrote Charley, "a fellow named Hatfield is here, courting sister May. She got acquainted with him at the seaside last summer and they are going to be married about Christmas. He's a curious chap, and I want you to give me your opinion of him."

I had already had some experience of the hospitality of Mapperley House, and I was nothing loth to accept Charley's invitation. The blue eyes of his sister May were well worth going a long way to look at, and as I had myself felt the force of their marvellous power to a very alarming degree before then, I had some curiosity to see the man who was to be made happy for life in their possession. The day after the receipt of Charley Dunham's letter, I packed up a carpet bag took the morning train for Daybrook, the nearest station to Mapperley House, which was some five miles distant from the town, and whose grand old turrets could be seen towering above the trees long before the train came to a stop.

Charley met me at the depot with a gig, and for the first two miles of the drive home could talk of nothing but dog and shooting. When he had in some degree tired himself, I ventured to ask him about May.

"O, she's happy as a queen," said Charley. "To tell the truth, she seems a great deal jollier about it than Hatfield does. He's a glum sort of a chap. I don't like him much."

"And they are really going to be married?" I said, inquiringly.

"Bless you! Yes. That was all settled

long ago. May has got half her wedding things made up already. The governor don't think the engagement is long enough, but he used to know Hatfield's father, and whatever May wants she usually gets, you know."

"Yes," said I, "I suppose so;" and relapsed into silence again, while Charley changed the subject and began on the shooting topic once more.

When I reached the house I was introduced at once to Hatfield, who was standing on the steps with May, awaiting our arrival. He was a soft-voiced, pleasant-looking man, not over twenty-five, and with that easy air of aristocratic nonchalance which is ever captivating to the feminine heart. At the first glance I knew him for a "lady killer" in the better sense of term. Though displaying nothing of vulgar conceit, he was conscious of his power, and I saw that no circumstance, however awkward, would ever cause him to lose his self-possession. It was no wonder that May had been caught at last.

I shook hands as cordially as a man who was unable to feel otherwise than a little jealous of him could, and having saluted May Dunham, we all went into the house together. At lunch I sat opposite my new acquaintance and was able to observe him more closely. Despite his pleasant face and a sly and merry twinkle in his eyes, there was a look which came at times across his features, that gave me an uncomfortable feeling of distrust.

"Do you know," I said to Charley, when we were alone that afternoon, "there is something in Hatfield's mind which he wouldn't care to talk about to either of us?"

"Think so?" asked Charley. "He appears to me to have some trouble weighing upon him, but I never have thought much about it."

"Something the matter," I said. "Doesn't May know what it is?"

"Can't say," said Charley, looking at me very much as if he thought I was manifesting considerable solicitude about other people's affairs. "I can't say, I'm sure."

I took Charley's implied hint and did not revert to the subject again. We commenced our work of destruction in Mapperley Wood early the following morning, and a week afterwards the table at Mapperley House groaned beneath the weight of partridges and quails which we provided for it. Hatfield accompanied us very frequently, but he was a poor shot, and did not seem to manifest any particular interest in the sport. Two hours in the morning were usually enough for him, and then he would shoulder his gun and march home to read Tennyson or Longfellow to May and leave Charley and me to carry on the war alone. I think one reason of his indifference to gunning lay in his antipathy to Charley's huge mastiff Crusoe, who, although worthless in hunting, always accompanied us, keeping a respectable distance in the rear, in full consciousness that he never was made for a game dog and that Leopard and Spot, Charley's setters, understood the business in hand a great deal better than he did. He was a magnificent fellow, however, and lord of all the manor grounds, and in consideration of his faithful services as sentinel during the night, Charley never refused to take him with us on our excursions by day. The feeling between himself and Hatfield was quite mutual, for the latter never ventured near the dog but Crusoe would show his teeth and growl at him most suspiciously.

One morning Charley and I unbushed a flock of partridges, and when they settled again the dogs were unable to find them. In our endeavors to discover the lost birds we became widely separated, and at last towards twelve o'clock, tired with the morning's work, I resolved to return to the house. As I approached the grounds of the mansion I heard voices in the shrubbery, one of which I recognized as Hatfield's and so stopped to listen whether the other were not Charley's. The persons of the speakers were hidden from me by the thick growth of evergreen beyond the walk, but I could hear every word of their conversation quite distinctly.

"I tell you," said Hatfield, "that I must have more money."

"And I say," returned the other, whom I instantly perceived was not Charley, but a stranger, "that I have advanced all I am going to on this cursed nonsense. I don't see any likelihood of getting a return for my investment."

"I've done all that I agreed to do," said Hatfield.

"You promised to marry the girl," said the other.

"Well, I am engaged to be married to her."

"But you have fallen in love with her, too?"

"What of that?"

"Much. If you have got spooney in the matter, there is very little chance of my getting my money back. When we struck this bargain, Daniel Hatfield, it was to be purely a business arrangement. I was to furnish the money and set you up in good style. You were to do the work and marry the girl. When we got possession of her property, we were to divide the profits. Now you've broken faith and got sweet on her, and you know, as well as I do, if you marry her, not one cent of her money shall I ever set eyes on."

"Tom Burns," said Hatfield, "I told you when I was in such trouble six months ago, that if you would pay off my debts and advance me enough to live on until next year, I would undertake to marry a rich girl, and that you should be paid for your investment at least four fold out of my future wife's estate. To this you agreed, and the result of our bargain was that I sought the acquaintance of May Dunham. I tell you fairly that although I owe to you all my opportunities of knowing her, yet I have bitterly cursed the day when that miserable contract was made. For I have found in May Dunham a true-hearted, noble, generous girl, Thomas Burns—well worthy the earnest love of a more honest man than I, and I have hated and despised myself for the wretched part I am playing in this matter. But I promise that you shall be well paid for these advances. May Dunham will be worth a million on her father's death, and her marriage settlement will not be less than a quarter of that sum. And if you hold to your bargain as I have so far held to mine, you must let me have another installment at once."

"I have a better plan than that in my head," returned the other. "Walk down towards the town with me while I explain it to you. This shrubbery is a dangerous place to discuss a secret like ours."

I parted the branches with my hand and looked through at them as they moved away. The stranger was a thick-set, red-haired man with heavy, animal jaws, and carried in his hand a stout stick. The couple walked slowly down the lane towards the road, the stranger gesticulating in an explanatory manner, while Hatfield ever and anon interrupted him with a graceful movement of his arm, as though depreciating what his companion was saying.

Here was a conspiracy in good earnest. I leaned back against the fence considerably astonished and not a little bewildered as to what I ought to do. My first impulse was to go straightway to May and reveal to her all that I had heard. Then the afterthought came to me that even if I were to do so, I should not be believed. May's confidence in her lover was unlimited. I should never be able to shake it by any bare statement of facts unsupported by other evidence. Therefore I resolved for the present at least to keep my accidental knowledge of Hatfield's plans to myself. He seemed to be not so much a villain as a weak fellow who had got himself first into pecuniary difficulties and afterwards into bad company. Perhaps he would confess the whole affair himself to May before the wedding, and in the sincere hope that he would do so, I resolved to keep quiet at present and say nothing about it.

A day or two after this, while we were all at breakfast, there came a letter in the morning post, addressed to Charley.

"That looks remarkably like the governor's handwriting," said Charley, looking at it and breaking the seal. "What's up now, I wonder?"

He dived at once into the contents, and in a moment pushed away his plate with a movement of annoyance.

"He's coming home day after tomorrow," he said. "Bother! Why couldn't he stay his time out?"

May looked at him out of her tender blue eyes reproachfully.

"That isn't the worst of it either," continued Charley, not heeding her. "He's going to bring company with him—old Mr. Pedroncelli and his wife."

"Mr. Pedroncelli!" exclaimed May.

"Yes. We'll all have to toe the mark while he's here, confound him. Coming events cast their shadows before. Here's a postscript about the family plate."

"What about the family plate?" asked May.

"He says it must be got home and rubbed up in honor of our distinguished visitor, who is of very aristocratic family and used to considerable splendor in all his surroundings. He says we must fix up the north

chamber as handsomely as possible. I see we are to have a regular old martinet with us. Good-by to the shooting and all the other fun."

May turned to me to explain that the family service of plate, which was very old, massive and valuable, was usually kept at the bank in Daybrook for safety, and never used except upon what her father considered state occasions, when it was brought to the house and cleaned up for service.

Hatfield remarked that it would be well to be sure of the genuineness of the letter before taking the plate from the banker's.

"There's no doubt about the letter," said Charley, tossing it to me. "Do you think there is?"

"I should say not," I replied. "That is certainly Mr. Dunham's signature."

And so also said May.

The necessary orders were accordingly given to the banker and on the following day the plate came home. It was a most elegant service and consisted of a great many pieces, so many, in fact, that the three housemaids were kept busy through the whole day in scouring it up and getting it ready for use. At night it was arranged upon the various tiers of the great oak sideboard in the long dining-room and covered up with a green cloth. The north chamber was cleaned and fitted up, and we all retired to rest that evening in considerable curiosity as to what sort of visitor the morrow would bring to us, and in not a little disappointment at the sudden termination of our sport.

The room assigned to me during my stay was in the east gable of the house and almost directly over the dining-hall. I mention this in order that the events of that night, which have never passed from my memory, may be thoroughly understood. The family retired to rest at the usual hour, but I was unable to sleep. The nervousness induced by the expected arrival of the dreadful Pedroncelli, kept me tossing from one side of the bed to the other, and in vain I endeavored to court the drowsy god. All efforts to obtain sleep were fruitless. The dog Crusoe, too, seemed unusually wakeful. He came beneath my window at intervals of five or ten minutes and vented his uneasiness in a series of low howls, so lugubrious that I jumped out of bed at last, and opening the window, reproved him sharply. He went away reluctantly, but soon came back, whining piteously and scratching the pillars of the piazza below with his nails. The night was intensely dark, and occasional violent gusts of wind, rattling the shutters, betokened rain. I attributed the dog's nervousness to the approaching storm, and finally, unable to endure his noise any longer, went down stairs into the front hall and let him in. No sooner had I opened the door than he bolted past me like a shot and disappeared. Fastening the door again I called to him softly, but could not ascertain whether he had vanished. The door leading to the dining-room was slightly ajar, and putting my head through the opening, I called again. Still no response. The entire house was silent as death. Supposing that the dog had been frightened at the wind and had sought a place of safety under the stairs or somewhere else, I gave up the search and returned to my room, laughing at Charley's faith in the courage of his mastiff.

Toward midnight I must have dropped asleep, for it was not long after that when I awoke with a sudden start and a vague sensation of terror. It seemed to me that a terrible crash had rung through the house so loud and fearful that the very foundation of the earth had been shaken. Yet I lay quietly in my bed and apparently nothing extraordinary had happened. I felt about me in the darkness to see if the bedclothes had been disturbed. Everything was in its proper place. I arose and threw open the shutters. The night was still intensely dark and the west was echoing with the low mutterings of distant thunder.

"I have been dreaming," I thought, "and the wind has frightened me."

Once more I returned to bed and this time did not awake until the daylight, cold gray, came struggling through the window. I had not finished my morning toilet before I heard a piercing scream in the hall below, and a hurried scampering up stairs. I opened the door and looked out into the hall. One of the housemaids met me with a face blanched to an ashy white, and fell fainting at my feet. Then Charley came dashing after her, flushed with intense excitement.

"Come down stairs," he cried. "For God's sake keep this thing from May."

"What do you mean?" I said, standing upon the threshold in amazement.

He made no reply, but taking me hurriedly by the arm, led me down the stairs. Pushing open the doors with his foot he pointed to a dark object lying at the further end of the dining-room. The floor and walls of the apartment were half covered with blood, and a little red and sickening stream was flowing silently across the carpet and trickling beneath the door. Crusoe the mastiff, his jaws reeking with blood stood in the centre of the room growling fiercely, while the elegant service of plate was scattered about in dire confusion, some of the salvers and pitchers battered and bruised, and tinged like everything else, with the dreadful hue of blood.

I went with Charley across the room and looked at the dark object in the corner. With a cry of horror I started back, for the face of the corpse was turned towards me, and the face was that of Daniel Hatfield.

"We have the dog to thank for this," said Charley. "See how his teeth have torn the villain's throat from ear to ear!"

We hardly knew how to relate the dreadful news to May, but we mustered courage at last and told her all. Poor thing! It stunned and bewildered her at first, but time brought healing to the cruel wound, and when I had told her of what I had heard in the shrubbery, she thanked God for her fearful escape. We could not quite condemn Hatfield as the real villain, for he had doubtless yielded to the importunities of Burns, and consented to connive at the robbery for the sake of giving the latter some security for the money he had loaned him. The letter from Charley's father had been a forgery from first to last, and a clever ruse to get the plate into the house. It would have been an easy matter then to secure it, had the dog remained outside as usual. But Fate had ordered otherwise. The man Burns made his escape in time and we never heard anything of him again.

### A Post-master's Troubles.

DURING Jackson's term, an idle spendthrift was made Postmaster at Pensacola. He was instructed to make his returns quarterly, after depositing the avails of the office in the nearest bank. Time passed, and no word came from him. Six months having passed, the Department wrote to him that he would be dismissed if he didn't report.

The gentleman thereupon wrote to the Postmaster General that the duties of his office had been faithfully performed so far as the delivery of letters and the collection of the postage were concerned. He was sure of that, for he had a lively yellow boy who attended to that business. He was directed to deposit the avails of the office in the nearest bank. He done so, but unfortunately that was a faro bank and there he had placed the funds of the government and he was sorry to say that up to that time the institution had refused to honor his drafts. As to the letters written him by the Postmaster General, he felt honored, and hoped the correspondence might be continued.

He should have responded to the interrogatories of the Department, but he had been so constantly occupied at the bank in trying to get his money back that he had no time to devote to composition, and his negro boy was not equal to the task. He would cheerfully reply to any proper questions in future, and he thought that explanation ought to be satisfactory.

### Wise Words.

Foolish spending is the father of poverty. Do not be ashamed of work. Work for the best salary or wages you can get, but work for half price rather than be idle. Be your own master, and do not let society and fashion swallow up your individuality. Do not eat up or wear out all you can earn. Compel the selfish body to spare something for profits saved. Be stingy to your own appetite, but merciful to other's necessities. Help others, and ask no help for yourself. See that you are proud, but let your pride be of the right kind. Be too proud to be lazy; too proud to give up without conquering every difficulty; too proud to wear a coat you can not pay for; too proud to be in company you can not keep up with in expense; too proud to lie or steal or cheat; too proud to be stingy.

A lady promised to give her maid twenty-five dollars as a marriage portion. The girl got married to a man of low stature, and her mistress on seeing him was surprised, and said, "Well, Mary, what a little husband you have got!" "La!" exclaimed the girl; "what could you expect for twenty-five dollars?"